

# Souvenirs of Travel in China

## I. HOW WE SAW YUAN SHIH KAI.

It was the last day of April and Dr. Maud Mackey and I were returning by train from Paotingfu to Peking. We had scarcely pulled out of the station before her quick eye discovered an unusual excitement on board, and she inquired into it. The conductor told us that the Viceroy of Chihli Province was coming towards us in his special car, but it was not yet known where the trains would meet. Consequently, at every way station on the route, our eyes were entertained by gay squads of Chinese cavalry and crowds of men waiting expectantly, and our train was held up in each place until ordered by telegram to move forward.

Nothing could have suited me better

than the prospect of setting eyes on Yuan Shih Kai, for I had acquired an admiration for the man. All across Shantung I had heard of him. He had been a good governor of that province for some years, and in Boxer Year he saved the life of every foreigner and much foreign property in Shantung. I had been carried in a chair upon the grounds of the very yamen at Tsinanfu where Yuan was practically a prisoner for a period, not daring to leave his own yamen because he, and two other enlightened governors, had ventured to interpret the official telegram which he received, "Kill the foreigners," as *Protect the foreigners*. Whether true or not, the story goes that Yuan, explaining his conduct to the

"(1) memoirs book," Vol. XXIV, Feb., 1909  
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Empress Dowager, told her that he acted upon the conviction that the telegraph operator made a mistake; he knew *her*



YUAN SHIH KAI.

From photograph loaned by the American Bible Society.

too well to suppose she could send out such an order. And the astute woman answered that his judgment was perfectly correct. First or last, most of the men in Shantung missions had personal dealings with Governor Yuan, and all spoke well of him. He was a "sensible, reasonable man, with great force of character." There was "no indecision" about him, his manner was "alert," his speech direct, "polite but not loaded with Orientalisms." Rev. J. Ashley Fitch said: "Yuan Shih Kai is the most like a foreigner of any Chinese I ever saw." When Weih sien Station was destroyed by a mob, the governor expressed his deep regret and called for an indemnity bill; and when our brethren, presenting the bill in full, expressed their wish as friends of the Chinese people to abate the total by one-half, their offer was thoroughly appreciated by all the yamen officials. Yuan Shih Kai gave his testimony a permanent form by placing an inscription recording this transaction on the gate of scornful Weih sien City, and another upon the mission gate about a mile away.

And now we were going to see that great man. We had been allowed to leave one unpronounceable place after another, until, at last, the unusually long waiting time, and excessive activity

around the railway station, indicate that we have reached the place where the Viceroy's train will stop. Here, the cavalry is drawn up in one straight line facing the track. Military officers prance up and down the platform, wearing high mandarin boots and round mandarin hats with waving red plumes and a fine conspicuous button on top. So far military; but the rest of their dress, how unsoldierly! They swish around in rich, maroon-colored silk coats belted down, their delicate pink silk linings constantly displayed, as the long flaps fly out when they walk or are turned up in the belt safe from splashing mud. Hark! the whistle of a locomotive. Instantly every cavalryman has dismounted and stands rigid by his horse's head and, in a line a little in front of the horses, every one of those pink and maroon silk gowns is kneeling on the earth. Which way shall we look, Dr. Mackey? Oh, here is the train at our back, and our eyes

CARD OF YUAN, GOVERNOR OF SHANTUNG.  
Black characters on red ground. Original is nearly ten inches long and half as wide.

are glued upon it. One open car after another passes our window, a kaleidoscopic confusion of horses and camp paraphernalia and racket and impudent soldiers staring at us impudently and yelling to us—I would never look at them a minute if I could see Yuan Shih Kai in any other way. What, if after all, we shall miss him, Doctor! No; here comes the Viceroy's car and halts within a stone's throw. A group of superior-looking men in elegant dress stand on the ground and cover the steps, and all the pink-maroon gowns are saluting and everybody is shaking his own hands and they chat and smile with an air of comradeship, but which oh, which of them, is Yuan himself? Our train is starting; it is now or never. Oh, Dr. Mackey, *which* is the Viceroy? Just as we pass those steps, directly in front of us, there is the flash of a fine, intelligent face which breaks into an attractive smile. Yuan Shih Kai, surely! I had been looking for a man as tall as the King of Troy; now I remember they said he was only medium height. He was soon left well behind, and this was the first train in China that went too fast for me.

A month later as I was visiting Seoul, I stood on the spot where, one night in 1884, the King of Korea was shut up in a house by revolutionists. That night Yuan Shih Kai, then a young officer who had been sent with troops to win his spurs in Korea, stepped in and saved the King's life and slaughtered his enemies. The name of Yuan is powerful with Koreans. They say that, on that memorable night, he jumped over a wall twenty feet high without running to it, and that while the shot flew around his head he simply brushed it off with his hand!

At Seoul, there are richer memories of this Chinese officer. He had a personal acquaintance with the young missionary, John Heron, M. D., whose horsemanship and big gray horse he much admired. He called upon the doctor's medical aid for his family and informally visited him, and joked with him through an interpreter. When Dr. Heron lay in his coffin, standing nearest it as a chief mourner all through the funeral service, was Yuan Shih Kai.

It is a matter of history how this man has been rapidly promoted in recent years, until he stands before the world,

to-day, probably the most influential of all Chinese. We are able to judge his qualities by certain of his acts—as his pitching the idols into the river at Pao-tungfu and being the first to start a system of public education in his country. One of his sayings is this: "The establishment of schools for girls is still more indispensable, because women are the roots of the nation." He revealed to the outside world that the Legations were alive in Peking and so opened the way for foreign troops to go to the rescue. When there was an attempt to revive Boxerism in 1904, he issued a proclamation beginning as follows:

"1. Anyone creating wild rumors calculated to alarm or produce doubt in the people's mind *will be beheaded!*"

"2. Anyone teaching or learning mystic practices, like Boxer measures and red-lantern doctrines, *will be beheaded!*"

Who can doubt that the influence of the upright and friendly doctor twenty years ago, when Yuan Shih Kai was still at an impressible age, and the influence of other American missionaries whom he has met all along his later path, have colored his opinions about the American people and his judgment upon international questions? He is now forty-eight years old.

## II. SACRED GROUND.

We had gone from Shanghai up the Yangtse River by steamboat, with a Nova Scotia captain, to Chinkiang. One of our quests there was the grave of a loved missionary, so on Sunday we strolled out to find it, Mrs. Johnson leading the way. It was a pleasant surprise to see a foreigners' homelike, sunny graveyard in China. It sloped up a hillside, was thoroughly walled about, and it wore no air of neglect, although the stones, brought from distant places and inscribed in various languages of Europe, touchingly suggested the remoteness of the homes represented there. English inscriptions predominated. Oft quoted triumphant Scripture passages like "I know that my Redeemer liveth," read in the surroundings of heathenism, ring with the very music of Heaven.

As we stood there, a bare-headed young Chinese woman came climbing up the hill to a high-heaped, rather freshly made Chinese grave, which was above and overlooked the quiet yard of the foreigners. She threw herself beside the

grave and wailed in a rough, loud voice again and again: "Oh, my mother, my mother; I have eaten bitterness, I have eaten bitterness!"\* In a direct line down the hillside from the wailing woman, my eye fell on a tall granite cross raised to the memory of a British ship's officer, and on it I read the words, carved: "Thy will be done."

Two American women sleep in this sacred ground at Chinkiang: Jennie Anderson Laughlin since 1899, and Rose Hoffman Lobenstine, only last summer-laid to rest. These two did their utmost among Chinese women to transfuse dark-

\*Translated by Mrs. C. F. Johnson.

ness of soul with the light of their own Christian faith, and to change the bitter cry of heathenism to "Thy will be done."

[Since the above was in type, the cable announces the dismissal of Yuan Shih Kai from his position of Grand Councillor. Exactly what might have been expected at an Oriental court in a stage of transition. There is always somebody to be got rid of. In a country where men of his ability and courage are a limited number, it will be no surprise if he reappears above the public horizon and, if not, we will remember him for the good that he did. His name is pronounced by accenting the third word and the first syllable of the first word: *You-ān Shě Kī*. Yuan is said to be one Chinese syllable; some people accent the last half, *You-an*.]

I do not think there is a Christian in Chefoo more respected and loved than Mrs. Gu. In fact, she has been strongly urged by prominent persons in the church to become something more than a mere "private Christian" and accept the office of a minister! She would not listen to the proposal for an instant, not believing very much in the propriety of women's preaching. She was chosen by the church, years ago, as deaconess to look after poor or straying members. Her husband is elder in Chefoo Church, a very good man. (Mrs. J. L.) *Helen Nevius.*